The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. IX. BOSTON, AUGUST, 1900. No. 3

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEORGE H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 272 CONGRESS ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 3.

IDEALS 25
SYMPATHY 25
THE STILL HOUR 27
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 28
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL 30
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR 32
NATURAL HISTORY 33
IN TROUBLE, REACH OUT 34
A SUMMER RAMBLE 35
AMUSEMENT COLUMN 35
IMPORTANT NOTICES 36

IDEALS.

O bright Ideals! how ye shine
Aloft in realms of air!
Ye pour your streams of light divine
Above our low despair.

I've climbed and climbed these weary years,
To come your glories nigh:
I'm tired of climbing, and in tears
Here on the earth I lie.

As a weak child all vainly tries
To pluck the evening star,
So vain have been my lifelong cries
To reach up where ye are.

Shine on, shine on, through earth's dark night,
Nor let your glories pale!
Some stronger soul may win the height
Where weaker ones must fail.

And this one thought of hope and trust
Comes with its soothing balm,
As here I lay my brow in dust
And breathe my lowly psalm,—

That not for heights of victory won,
But those I tried to gain,
Will come my gracious Lord's "Well done!"
And sweet effacing rain.

Then on your awful heights of blue
Shine on, forever shine:
I come! I'll climb, I'll fly to you;
For endless years are mine.

—*Edmund H. Sears.*

SYMPATHY.

Sympathy is the soul of religion. It is a wonderfully sweet and beatific grace. It is the harmony of the affections, and in its active, beneficent spirit a healing and a helpful power. Sympathy, in its tender benignities, is most attractive and most excellent. Sympathy is a little better than love, since it is love in action, is concrete, and comes closer to the life. It is the stream coming out of the lake, moving, fertilizing, giving life and gladness to meadow and marge. James Berry Bensel says beautifully,—

"Each shared my sorrows; yet to me
One brought but love, one sympathy!"

When you study the New Testament, especially the life and words of Jesus, whose religion was love,—"love to God and man," and to God in man,—you will see that humanity is religion, the only religion. God sent a man to be a Saviour of men. Jesus always spoke of himself as "son of man"; and into humanity he would have all pour their love, and for it make their sacrifices. The sympathy of God and the sympathy of Jesus meant help to man.

Sympathy gives a new touch of life and reality to everything it approaches or would embrace. Like mercy, it blesses him who gives and him who receives. To practise this beautiful charity is to be Christ-like; for he went about doing good, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice. To bear one another's burdens, to help each other over the hard

places in life, is what we are here for; for we are, after all, children of one Father, brothers and sisters of one family. Now there are natures which are not sympathetic, while there are others whose orchestral being thrills all with joy and life and satisfaction. The physician heals more by what he carries in his face and heart than by what he has in his medicine-case. Love and sympathy are the gossamer threads which bind heart to heart, cement friendship, and enrich life with a flood of delights and of joys pure and ennobling. The Gethsemanes of life are more numerous and sadder than we are wont to think, and no one should suffer them alone. Yet, at best, each heart knoweth its own sorrow, as also its own joy. Our deepest experiences, whatever help we get, must be borne very much alone. We are like trees whose tops alone touch each other. The sympathetic alone can enter the holy of holies of our deepest life. How beautiful it is for people to try to feel the common current of sympathy, which was meant to knit together heart to heart! Sympathy is going over to another's point of view, and from that seeing other life and the world.

True sympathy is active, not passive: it leads, does not follow; it attracts and inspires. Nature has in it hints of sympathy, as in the laws of cohesion, gravitation, the ebb and flow of the tides, rhythm in music, and the measures of the pulse. Sing over the keys of a piano ; and, if you listen well, the song, sad or joyous, sings itself back again. Reason is the way in which we think our relationship to the world: sympathy is the way we feel it; and this feeling of relationship to others and to other things is unity, is religion, is God and heaven. We must have this sympathy, to be a poet or to read poetry, to understand or to do anything well. And, until we believe this with all our hearts and souls, the higher exercise of faith will be closed, and the religious life will be stunted and perverted.

By this exercise of practical sympathy we may create new virtues to the faulty and redeem the evil mind. You can save people by confiding in them, by loving them, by believing in them when others have ceased to confide and appreciate, because not understanding them.

Sympathy does not judge people by their worst, but by their best qualities and actions, and believes in them in spite of their failings and shortcomings. Nay, some people's failings so lean to virtue's side that we want to believe in them almost because of the steps aside. At least, so noble, but weak, are they that we easily forgive.

The need of sympathy is very great in youth because of its sensitiveness, and because it is likely to have done nothing to make self understood, because it lives at home, and is not appreciated. Parents should be first to discover and call forth the germs of greatness in the child, the youth, and treat it as an object of great expectations, as did Mary of old her son. Let the neighbors say, "It is only Joseph's son: we knew his father and mother,—very common people"; but say you, "He shall be a prophet, and save Israel!" And, because of that sympathetic faith in him, he will be all the more likely to meet that abounding expectation and justify that confidence.

There are many hearts and homes in need of sympathy: there are families where the tender, sympathetic spirit is a stranger. Husband and wife should take deepest interest in each other's affairs and happiness. There is love enough in the heart: there is love enough in the world. What we need is to exercise this love and sympathy which are felt, but shut up in the soul. Think of poor Blanco White, with no one near to give him sympathy, asking his servant Margaret to sit near him, that in his sorrow and loneliness he might be strengthened!

Hear Beethoven, in the isolation of a portion of his life, saying, "Art alone held me back from taking my own life." On the other hand, hear Mohammed, when asked to forget his early wife in the love of the then younger and more beautiful one. "Nay, I will not forget my Cadija; for, when no one else in the world believed in me, she gave me sympathy." Sympathy is the saving of many a timid soul to success, and perhaps to greatness; while without it he would have fallen and failed.

So, too, in relation to social problems, love and sympathy are better than coldness and severity in the adjustment of the problems of labor and capital. Or take the

more difficult question of poverty. Sympathy here is needed, but it should be scientific rather than emotional sympathy.

Charles Dickens thought it enough that we empty our pockets into the hands of every beggar, to save the miseries of the poor; but George Eliot was wiser when she said, "Had either Romola or Tito been less tender-hearted, the worst tragedies of their lives would have been avoided." Wisdom must be yoked with kindness. The motto of the Associated Charities in our larger cities, "Not alms, but a friend," is excellent.

There is more true sympathy in the church than ever. Religion is more than ever taking account of the humanities as its special province. True sympathy is the love side of religion, the heart of Jesus.

The throb of a warm heart of love against our own, whatever our moral conditions, is always refreshing. There are times when the wisest and the strongest hunger for human sympathy, and should receive it,— the rich as well as the poor. Sorrow knows no grades, and religion is democratic.

This sympathy ought to be deep, true, and sincere, and to be exercised in behalf of any or all who may stand in need of it. In its wider sense, it is a symphony, a whole, as of music, to the soul. William Ellery Channing gives us a recipe for such an ideal. He says, "To live content, to listen to stars and birds, to let the spirit grow up through the common in life,— this is my symphony."

A. Judson Rich.

THE STILL HOUR.

The music of the days which are to come
Doth haunt me ever, and my footsteps move
In time unto it,— paces of deep love
And faith unchangeable! I hear the hum
Of mighty workings, and cannot be dumb.
To the grand concerts of the spheres above
Mankind moves on, vain omens to disprove;
While overhead, and in the vanward, some
Prophetic soul, lark-like, doth soar and sing.
A few poor snatches of that music here,
My fellowmen, I, as a pledge, would bring,—
The music at my heart still answering clear,
Which tells me that there must be yet some string
Untouched which God intended Man to hear.

— Henry Ellison.

Welcome, pure thoughts and peaceful hours,
Enriched with sunshine and with showers!
Welcome, fair hopes and holy cares,
The not to be repented shares
Of time and business, the sure road
Unto my last and loved abode!
O Supreme Bliss!
The circle, centre, and abyss
Of blessings, never let me miss
Nor leave that path which leads to Thee,
Who art alone all things to me!

— Henry Vaughan.

The particular annoyance which befell you this morning, the vexatious words which met your ear and "grieved your spirit," the disappointment which was His appointment for to-day, the slight but hindering ailment, the presence of some one who is "a grief to the mind" to you,— whatever this day seemeth not joyous, but grievous, is linked in "the good pleasure of His goodness" with a corresponding afterward of "peaceable fruit," the very seed from which, if you only do not choke it, this shall spring and ripen.

— F. R. Havergal.

Life is a great gift; and, as we reach years of discretion, we most of us naturally ask ourselves what should be the main object of our existence. Even those who do not accept "the greatest good of the greatest number" as an absolute rule will yet admit that we should all endeavor to contribute, as far as we may, to the happiness of our fellow-creatures. There are many, however, who seem to doubt whether it is right that we should try to be happy ourselves. Our own happiness ought not, of course, to be our main object, nor, indeed, will it ever be secured if selfishly sought. We may have many pleasures in life, but must not let them have rule over us, or they will hand us over to sorrow.

I cannot, however, but think that the world would be better and brighter if our teachers would dwell on the Duty of Happiness as well as on the Happiness of Duty; for we ought to be as cheerful as we can, if only because to be happy ourselves is a most effectual contribution to the happiness of others. Every one must have felt that a cheerful friend is like a sunny day, which sheds its brightness on all around. And

most of us can, as we choose, make of this world either a palace or a prison.

There is no doubt, some selfish satisfaction in yielding to melancholy, and fancying that we are victims of fate,—in brooding over grievances, especially if more or less imaginary. To be bright and cheerful often requires an effort. There is a certain art in keeping ourselves happy; and in this respect, as in others, we require to watch over and manage ourselves almost as if we were somebody else. Sorrow and joy, indeed, are strangely interwoven. Too often

> We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not.
> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught.
> Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. *Shelley.*

If, indeed, this be true, if mortal life be so sad and full of suffering, no wonder that Nirvâna—the cessation of sorrow—should be welcomed, even at the sacrifice of consciousness. But ought we not to place before ourselves a very different ideal,—a healthier, manlier, and nobler hope? Life is not to live merely, but to live well. There are some "who live without any design at all, and only pass in the world like straws on a river,—they do not go, they are carried." *

If we do our best, if we do not magnify trifling troubles, if we resolutely look, I do not say on the bright side of things, but at things as they really are, if we avail ourselves of the manifold blessings which surround us, we cannot but feel that life is, indeed, a glorious inheritance.—*Pleasures of Life, Sir John Lubbock.*

We cannot always be doing a great work, but we can always be doing something that belongs to our condition. To be silent, to suffer, to pray when we cannot act, is acceptable to God. A disappointment, a contradiction, a harsh word, an annoyance, a wrong received and endured as in his presence, is worth more than a long prayer; and we do not lose time if we bear its loss with gentleness and patience, provided the loss was inevitable, and was not caused by our own fault.—*Fénelon.*

---

*Seneca.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your

full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

If any person or society has a set of Hymn and Tune Books to dispose of, will they please communicate with Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park. Roxbury, Mass., who will give the address of a mission Sunday-school that is in great need of such books.

Mrs. P. B. Rucker, Forks of Buffalo, Amherst County, Virginia, asks for Fiske's "Civil Government," "Paradise Lost," Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico," "In His Steps," "Fair God," and "House of Seven Gables."

Dear Mrs. Nichols,— A friend of mine, who knew of my afflictions and struggles, led me into the merits of your Book Club, she, of course, thinking me a worthy object. I have been an invalid the best part of my life. I am now able to teach a part of the time, and covet usefulness so much. I know no one in this neighborhood acquainted with the luxury of good books. I have had a few books and magazines from some of your members. I carry them and send them to these poor people, who have nothing to read. God must have directed some one to tell me of you dear helpers in this work. I send in a request for "Quo Vadis" by Henryk Sienkiewicz, "Samantha among the Brethren" by Josiah Allen's Wife, and "Grace Truman." May God make it easy for some one to give them to me! I want them to read myself and for my two sisters and a brother, besides friends in this remote mountainous region. I hope to get the books, and that they will prove a blessing to myself and friends. Your unknown friend, (Miss) Mattie E. Sale, Dellaplane, Wilkes County, North Carolina.

Mrs. Magga Clark, Bowie, Texas, who is living in a lonely place and is in poor health, is anxious for any reading.

Mrs. J. M. Sizer, St. Just, Virginia, asks for "Les Misérables."

I am desirous of starting a small library for a negro mission school, and would appreciate all the help you could render me in this cause. I would want something easy of comprehension, with good moral, not entirely religious,— Miss Alcott, Abbott, or something of that style. There are a few mothers in the school, but most of the scholars are young boys and girls. I will refer you to Rev. C. T. A. Pise, also Miss Eva Clark, both of Marietta. Thanking you in advance for any assistance, (Miss) Caroline Porcher Alston, Marietta, Georgia, Box 372.

C. C. Wright, superintendent of schools in Wilkes County, North Carolina, is trying to raise the standard of education in the county. It is low,— very, very low, indeed. He has begun the formation of a teachers' circulating library; but most of the teachers are of limited means, and their stipend so small they will not or cannot give much to the object, and its success depends largely on the aid they get from outside. Any books suitable for such purpose we would be pleased to receive. Address C. C. Wright, Straw, North Carolina.

I write on behalf of a poor but worthy family in my congregation, including two daughters about grown, asking that reading matter of any kind that is wholesome — books, papers, or magazines — be sent them by Cheerful Letter friends.

I will take pleasure in delivering all reading matter sent to me as follows. Rev. J. H. Davis, Jr., Raines, Cumberland, County, Virginia (pastor of Presbyterian church).

The *Christian Herald* is asked for by Mrs. M. E. Woodard, Waupaca, Wisconsin.

S. S. Bradford, Jr., Culpeper, Virginia, asks for the "Last of the Cavaliers," by Charlotte M. Yonge.

I receive a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* each month, and enjoy the sermons so much, also "Mothers' Council." I would like to ask for a "Second Reader," "Spelling Book," and "Arithmetic" for a little motherless boy who lives near me. He is so anxious to learn to read and write. I shall try to teach him if I can get books. Mrs. Ada Hall, Vera, Indian Territory.

I wish to thank the dear Cheerful Letter people for their kindness to me, for what reading they have sent. I hope you will send me occasional magazines and good novels, also some instructive reading and Bible Dictionary for my son (H. M. Wood). I am so far from church and so lonely, would be glad to receive a Bible, and wish to say all such will be thankfully received. Mrs. B. M. Wood, Thorn Hill, Virginia.

Mrs. Cora A. Hoskinson asks for any of M. Holley's books. Her address is now Nottawa, Michigan.

Mrs. Jane L. Cohoon, Penn Yan, New York, asks for "In His Steps" or any good reading.

Changes in Address.

Mrs. A. L. Rutledge, from Pikeville to Pitts Cross Roads, Tennessee. Jessie Shull, from Cloverport, Kentucky, to Chesterville, Illinois.

Mrs. Mary Sizer leaves "The Ladies' Aid" in charge of Mrs. Eva Beach, Flora Vista, New Mexico.

Mrs. Ida T. Tuck, from Rodney to Woodsdale, Person County, North Carolina.

Miss Clara Babcock has been married, and her address is now Mrs. Hiram Paul, Highlands, North Carolina.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

"BOYS NOT ALLOWED."

It was a conspicuous signboard, at least four feet long, with large black letters on a white ground: "Boys not allowed." I looked at it for some moments in a sort of bewildered surprise. I did not quite comprehend the meaning of the words. At last I understood it. I was waiting in a large railway station, where many trains connect, and most of the passengers from the train in which I was were eating dinner in a hotel near by. I was entirely alone in the car, with the exception of one boy who was perhaps eleven years old. I made an involuntary ejaculation as I read the words on the sign, and the boy looked around at me.

"Little boy," said I, solemnly, "do you see that sign?"

He turned his head, and, reading the ominous warning, nodded sullenly, but said nothing.

"Boy, what does it mean?" said I. "Boys must be allowed to come into this railway station. There are two now standing in the doorway directly under the sign!"

The latent sympathy in my tone touched his heart. He left his seat, and, coming to mine, edged in past me, and, putting his head out of the window, read the sentence aloud in a contemptuous tone. Then he offered me a peanut, which I took; and he proceeded to tell me what he thought of the sign.

"Boys not allowed!" said he. "That's just the way 'tis everywhere; but I never saw the sign up before. It doesn't make any difference, though, whether they put the sign up or not. Why, in New York (you live in New York, don't you?) they won't even stop the horse-cars for a boy to get on. Nobody thinks anything 'll hurt a boy; but they're glad enough to allow us when there's any errands to be done, and"—

"Do you live in New York?" interrupted I; for I did not wish to hear the poor little fellow's list of miseries, which I knew by heart beforehand without his telling me, having been hopeless knight errant of oppressed boyhood all my life.

Yes, he "lived in New York," and he "went to a grammar school," and he had "two sisters." And so we talked on in that sweet, ready, trustful talk which comes naturally only from children's lips, until the "twenty minutes for refreshments" were over, and the choked and crammed passengers, who had eaten big dinners in that breath of time, came hurrying back to their seats. Among them came the father and mother of my little friend. In angry surprise at not finding him in the seat where they left him, they exclaimed: —

"Now, where is that boy? Just like him! We might have lost every one of these bags!"

"Here I am, mamma," he called out pleasantly. "I could see the bags all the time. Nobody came into the car."

"I told you not to leave the seat, sir! What do you mean by such conduct?" said the father.

"Oh, no, papa," said poor Boy, "you only

told me to take care of the bags!" And an anxious look of terror came into his face, which told only too well under how severe a régime he lived.

I interposed hastily with: "I am afraid I am the cause of your little son's leaving his seat. He had sat very still till I spoke to him, and I believe I ought to take all the blame."

The parents were evidently uncultured, shallow people. Their irritation with him was merely a surface vexation, which had no real foundation in a deep principle. They became complaisant and smiling at my first word; and Boy escaped, with a look of great relief, to another seat, where they gave him a simple luncheon of saleratus gingerbread. "Boys not allowed to go into dinner at the Massasoit," thought I to myself; and upon that text I sat sadly meditating all the way from Springfield to Boston.

How true it was, as the little fellow had said, "that it doesn't make any difference whether they put the sign up or not." No one can watch carefully any average household where there are boys, and not see that there are a thousand little ways in which the boys' comfort, freedom, preference, will be disregarded, when the girls' will be considered. This is partly intentional, partly unconscious. Something is to be said, undoubtedly, on the advantage of making the boy realize early and keenly that manhood is to bear and to work, and womanhood is to be helped and sheltered. But this should be inculcated, not inflicted; asked, not seized; shown and explained, not commanded. Nothing can be surer than the growth in a boy of tender, chivalrous regard for his sisters and for all women if the seeds of it be rightly sown and gently nurtured. But the common method is quite other than this. It begins too harshly, and at once with assertion or assumption.

"Mother never thinks I am of any consequence," said a dear boy to me the other day. "She's all for the girls." This was not true; but there was truth in it. And I am very sure that the selfishness, the lack of real courtesy, which we see so plainly and pitiably in the behavior of the average young man of to-day, is the slow, certain result of years of just such feelings as this child expressed. The boy has to scramble for his rights. Naturally, he is too busy to think much about the rights of others. The man keeps up the habit, and is negatively selfish without knowing it.

Take, for instance, the one point of the minor courtesies (if we can dare to call any courtesies minor) of daily intercourse. How many people are there who habitually speak to a boy of ten, twelve, or fourteen with the same civility as to his sister a little younger or older?

"I like Miss ———," said this same dear boy to me one day; "for she always bids me good-morning."

Ah! never is one such word thrown away on a loving, open-hearted boy. Men know that safe through all the wear and tear of life they keep far greener the memory of some woman or some man who was kind to them in their boyhood than of the friend who helped or cheered them yesterday.

Dear, blessed, noisy, rollicking, tormenting, comforting Boy! What should we do without him? How much we like, without suspecting it, his breezy presence in the house! Except for him, how would errands be done, chairs brought, nails driven, cows stoned out of our way, letters carried, twine and knives kept ready, lost things found, luncheon carried to picnics, three-year-olds that cry led out at meeting, butterflies and birds nests' and birch bark got, the horse taken round to the stable, borrowed things sent home,— and all with no charge for time?

Dear, patient, busy Boy! Shall we not sometimes answer his question? Give him a comfortable seat? Wait, and not reprove him till after the company has gone? Let him wear his best jacket, and buy him half as many neckties as his sister has? Give him some honey, even if there is not enough to go round? Listen tolerantly to his ragging, and help him "do" his sums?

With a sudden shrill scream the engine slipped off on a side-track, and the cars glided into the great, grim city station, looking all the grimmer for its twinkling lights. The masses of people who were waiting and the masses of people who had come surged toward each other like two great waves, and mingled in a moment. I caught sight of my poor little friend, Boy, following his father, struggling along in a crowd,

carrying two heavy carpet-bags, a strapped bundle and two umbrellas, and being sharply told to "keep up close there."

"Ha!" said I, savagely, to myself: "doing porter's work is not one of the things which 'boys' are 'not allowed.'"

— *Helen Hunt Jackson.*

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.

INVERSNAID, LAKE LOMOND,
LADY OF THE LAKE COUNTRY,
June 26, 1900.

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—This year I had a young companion to go abroad with me. I will call her Undine; for, though not exactly at home at the bottom of the sea, she is very much at home on top of it, and resembles her famous namesake in some other respects besides the blue eyes and long fair hair,—among other things having a habit of vanishing into fogs and mists and becoming invisible, until I fear that she has turned into a foam-wreath, and gone to rejoin her ocean kindred.

Undine and I went to Chester and to Oxford. The great sight in Oxford at this season is the college gardens in all their June beauty.

In London we stayed two weeks. Sight-seeing, although amusing to the sight-seers, is not very entertaining to hear about. So I will speak of only two things,—which were a little off the track,—"Midsummer-Night's Dream," acted in the Botanic Gardens, in the middle of Regent's Park; and a mass meeting of women, to protest against the Transvaal War. We find that the war is strongly disapproved by all our English friends; and we were invited in one week to two meetings, the object of which was to protest against it. This struck us very much, as on the steamer by which we crossed the English passengers were in a state of enthusiastic excitement and sympathy for the English cause.

In England, one friend said to us that she felt sorry the English had received so much sympathy in the United States. It would not be so if the matter were rightly understood. "Our newspapers are all *bought up*," she added. It was an English lady who said this.

Our original plan had been to go from London to Scotland, June 20, spending about ten days there. But Undine wanted to go to Boston. She has a great many colonial ancestors, and desired to see the church where John Cotton preached. I thought we could take Boston on the way to Edinburgh, spending one night there.

Some kind friend suggested that since we were in Lincolnshire, in visiting Boston, we would of course see Lincoln cathedral on the way from Boston to Scotland. Undine has a strong taste for cathedrals; and, on consulting our Baedeker, we found that "Lincoln cathedral, splendidly crowning the hill on which the city is built, may perhaps claim to be the finest church in Great Britain." It would really be wrong not to visit it. We decided to see Lincoln cathedral.

My prophetic soul foresaw at once that, having admitted Lincoln cathedral to the plan of our tour, we could not pass by York minster. It was a very short time before Undine made this discovery. "We go *through* York, directly through it, so we *must* see York minster." Having foreseen the necessity, I was resigned to York minster.

But presently Undine discovered that Durham lay between York and Edinburgh. "But must we see Durham?" said I. "Is it necessary?" "Oh, it is really necessary," said Undine; and the guide-book supported her, saying, "Durham, one of the most important and most grandly situated of English cathedrals." I swallowed—if one may be permitted such a Brobdignagian expression—Durham cathedral. Durham was immediately followed by Peterborough. Here I tried to make a stand. "Why must we see Peterborough? Who says so?" "Why, everybody says we must see Peterborough. Miss S. first, and the H.'s and Mr. C. The guide-book also says, 'The cathedral is one of the most important Norman churches left in England.' We really cannot omit Peterborough."

However, we found that, by some accidental oversight on the part of our agent at the office, we could not fit in Peterborough. He had sold us tickets to Boston by the Eastern instead of the Northern route. The senior member of the firm of uncommercial travellers secretly did not regret this very much (although she took care to keep her sentiments to herself), but Undine was much disappointed. Life, regarded from a trav-

eller's standpoint, without a sight of Peterborough cathedral, seemed not worth having. Like the great military generals of antiquity, however, she determined to turn her defeat into a victory, and announced that, if we could not see Peterborough, we could (and must) see *Ely*, which was directly on our route to Boston. The guide-book also said of Ely cathedral that it is "one of the very largest and most imposing, one of the most individual, and distinctly the most varied in England."

I thought Undine deserved some compensation for losing Peterborough, and consented to accept Ely in its place.

The last night before we left London, a voice came from Undine's room, saying, "O Aunt L.! we *really must* see Cambridge!" But here I revolted. "No, no," said I. "We must draw the line somewhere; and I shall draw it at Cambridge." "Oh, why?" said Undine. Well, we had already assimilated—into a programme already full—four cathedrals and the town of Boston. Any old traveller knows that ten objects must be resigned for each one attained. But a young traveller learns this gradually.

L. F. C.

NATURAL HISTORY.

A GARDEN FERNERY.

An idea commonly prevails that our native ferns cannot easily be cultivated. But so far is this from the truth that one might assert that they can be more easily grown under favoring conditions than many of the common garden plants. In trying to domesticate them, there are two important points to be considered: first, they must have the shady situation that is essential to their development; and, second, and equally essential, they must have a soil that is suited to their needs. A spot on the north side of a building or high fence or in the shadow of trees is suitable for ferns, and is scarcely adapted to anything else. Flowering plants in such a situation grow tall and spindling and far from attractive. One can scarcely imagine how charming and restful the effect is to turn from the sunny spaces and bright hues of the flower garden to a group of vigorous and well-developed ferns standing, in dewy freshness, a little apart.

One way to have suitable soil for ferns is to bring with every clump transplanted from the woods a generous quantity of the earth surrounding the roots where they are dug up; but this is obviously not easy to do unless one is out driving, and finds handsome ferns near the roadside. The better way is to have a spot prepared in the beginning for the reception of the ferns that are brought home from autumn rambles. Dig out the earth to the depth of several inches over the space to be used for the fernery, and fill it with a soil prepared of equal parts of leaf mould, pasture loam, and sand, thoroughly mixed.

The autumn is much the best time to start an out-of-door fernery. One can easily see, then, the relative heights of the varying fronds, and plant them so that the taller may be in the centre or in the rear, and the shorter ones in the foreground. Further, ferns transplanted in the spring, though they may live and eventually become vigorous, suffer far more from the change the first season than flowering plants usually do.

There are more than one hundred varieties of ferns growing in the United States, but many of these are found only in the South and West. In most localities in New England from thirty to forty different kinds may be found. A fernery that should contain a representative of every fern in the region would be very interesting, but not necessarily more lovely than one that contained a dozen or more of the handsomer species.

The three kinds of Osmunda, the Clayton, the cinnamon, and the royal fern, are very attractive and hardy; the delicate Cystopheris is very common and very graceful; the Dicksonia to its other charms adds an agreeable odor; and there are several of the spleenworts and shield ferns that are tall and elegant. For lower ferns to fringe the border there are the evergreen polypody, smooth and glossy, with handsome large fruit dots; the moonwort; the dainty ebony fern; the tiny woodsia, with rusty lower surface; and the curious walking fern, if that be procurable. Some rocks must be put down an inch or so beneath the surface for the polypody; and it will grow just as far as the rocks are put, and no farther. Our native maidenhair is a general favorite; but it rarely survives the winter in Eastern Mas-

sachusetts, even though the roots are protected. It can hardly be the cold that kills it, for it grows in abundance in many places in Northern New Hampshire. The beautiful masses of it found in the vicinity of Centre Harbor and other towns near Lake Winnipiseogee, once seen, cannot be easily forgotten. The delicate climbing fern is much admired, but is somewhat rare, and, like the maidenhair, will scarcely reappear the second season under conditions that satisfy most of the other ferns mentioned.

There are some few ferns that are sufficiently tenacious of life to grow and mature in the garish sunshine. Such are the common brake, the Onoclea, and the Dicksonia. It is interesting to observe the difference between specimens of these ferns gathered in sunny places and in shady spots. Fronds of the Dicksonia in particular, so gathered, look so entirely unlike that a casual observer can hardly be convinced that they belong to the same species. The spore cases of the Dicksonia, by the way, are particularly beautiful under a glass, enclosed as they are in a tiny two-lipped green cup. The little green cup being a peculiarity of this genus, the Dicksonia can easily be identified by it.

To bring home from the woods a fern for the garden gives a pleasant incentive to an autumn walk. When they have withered and died down, and are hidden beneath the winter snows, we can only imagine the silent processes going on in the underground recesses. But, when in the early spring the fronds emerge from the soil and slowly rise and uncurl, one realizes for the first time, in watching their gradual development, how fascinating these flowerless plants are.

THE CLOVER'S TRICK.

Here you see the bees buzzing about the pretty pink clover-heads,— the sweet-smelling clover that grows so thickly in the fields of early summer. Can you tell me what plan the clover uses in flower-building? You will not find this easy to do, for the clover plays you a trick which you will not be able to discover without help. You believe, do you not, that you are looking at a single flower when you look at a clover-head? Well, you are doing nothing of the sort. You are looking at a great many little clover flowers which are so closely packed that they make the pink, sweet-scented ball which we have been taught to call the clover blossom.

It is incorrect to speak of so many flowers as one; and whenever we say, "This is a clover blossom," really we ought to say, "These are clover blossoms." We might just as well take a lock of hair,— a lock made up of ever so many hairs,— and say, "This is a hair." Now you all know it would not be correct to do this, and no more is it correct to call a bunch of clover blossoms "a blossoms." But, as most people do not understand this, undoubtedly the mistake will continue to be made.

Can you think of any good reason why so many of these little flowers should be crowded together in a head? What would happen if each little blossom grew quite alone? Why, it would look so small that the bee could hardly see it. And, sweet though the whole clover-head smells, the fragrance of a single flower would be so slight that it would hardly serve as an invitation to step in for refreshments. So it would seem that the clover-head does wisely in making one good-sized bunch out of many tiny flowers, for in this way the bees are persuaded to carry their pollen from one blossom to another. The moral of the clover story is this: Be very careful before you insist that you hold in your hand or see in the picture only one flower.— *Plants and their Children, by Mrs. Wm. Starr Dana.*

IN TROUBLE, REACH OUT.

In the mountains of North Carolina there is a remarkable tree, to which the guide invariably calls the traveller's attention. It stands, stately and green, on the top of a huge bare rock, on which there is not an atom of earth. But the roots cling and creep patiently over the face and down the sides of the stone until they reach old mother earth, and draw moisture and life from her bosom.

Some human beings, like this wonderful tree, have been condemned to grow in hard and sterile places. The very base of their life is poverty or grief or pain. But beneath the hardest rock of circumstance are

the throbbing life, the love, the happiness, which God has given to the world.

All that we need to do is to stretch out our roots a little farther, a little deeper, until we reach the water of life. Then, no matter how hard our condition, our lives shall grow and bear fruit.— *Youth's Companion.*

He who is plenteously provided for from within needs but little from without.— *Goethe.*

A SUMMER RAMBLE.

The quiet August noon has come;
A slumberous silence fills the sky,
The fields are still, the woods are dumb,
In glassy sleep the waters lie.

And mark yon soft white clouds that rest
Above our vale, a moveless throng;
The cattle on the mountain's breast
Enjoy the grateful shadow long.

Oh, how unlike those merry hours,
In early June, when Earth laughs out,
When the fresh winds make love to flowers,
And woodlands sing and waters shout.

When in the grass sweet voices talk,
And strains of tiny music swell
From every moss-cup of the rock,
From every nameless blossom's bell.

But now a joy too deep for sound,
A peace no other season knows,
Hushes the heavens and wraps the ground,
The blessing of supreme repose.

Away! I will not be, to-day,
The only slave of toil and care!
Away from desk and dust! away!
I'll be as idle as the air.

Beneath the open sky abroad,
Among the plants and breathing things,
The sinless, peaceful works of God,
I'll share the calm the season brings.

. . . . . .

The village trees their summits rear
Still as its spire, and yonder flock
At rest in those calm fields appear
As chiselled from the lifeless rock.

One tranquil mount the scene o'erlooks,—
There the hushed winds their Sabbath keep,
While a near hum from bees and brooks
Comes faintly like the breath of sleep.

Well may the gazer deem that when,
Worn with the struggle and the strife,
And heart-sick at the wrongs of men,
The good forsakes the scene of life,—
Like this deep quiet that awhile
Lingers the lovely landscape o'er
Shall be the peace whose holy smile
Welcomes him to a happier shore.

—*William Cullen Bryant.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

Mangled Verses.

Insert vowels in the following lines where the dashes are placed, and form a verse of a poem by Longfellow:—

-f th-- -rt w-rn -nd h-rd b-s-t
W-th s-rr-ws, th-t th-- w--ldst f-rg-t,
-f th-- w--ldst r--d - l-ss-n, th-t w-ll k--p
Th- h--rt fr-m f--nt-ng -nd th- s--l fr-m sl--p.
G- t- th- w--ds -nd h-lls! N- t--rs
D-m th- sw--t l--k th-t n-t-r- w--rs.

A Bird Puzzle.

1. Transpose the letters which form the name of a bird, and find the home of many of them.
2. Another name will make a den.
3. Another, a term in botany.
4. Another, an adjective.
5. Another, when the whip-poor-will begins to sing.
6. And this last bird will make what he never has to pay for his nest.

Charades.

Through nature's veins doth course my quickening *first.*
'Neath salt sea-waves my *second* is immersed.
Straight from its fragrant, bracken-covered bed
My *whole* uprears its graceful, fronded head.

2.

In the time of my *last*, men do my *first.*
Of moods, my *whole* names one of the worst. E. P. P.

Decapitations.

Fill out the spaces left in the following verses by a word whose first letter is dropped in each succeeding line.

Turning his missal's ——
A monk sat under the ——
Chanting aloud his ——

He has on his face a ——
Which showed from beneath his ——
And, as he chanted, an ——

Screamed and hit him a ——
Which laid the poor monk ——

Answers in July Number.

Enigma.

"Liberty and Union now and forever, one and inseparable." — *Webster.*

Charades.

1. Almanac. 2. Burdock.

Familiar Quotations.

1. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. 2. Swift. 3. Longfellow. 4. Samuel Johnson.

Conundrums.

1. A-dri-atic. 2. Majesty. 3. An upright piano. 4. A lyre.

Will the person who sends *The Cheerful Letter* to Mrs. W. P. Angell, Gardner, Mass., please discontinue it, as it is unclaimed at the office?

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Mary L. Richardson, Glade Creek, Tennessee.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country, for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.